

Marley Tribute Could Be Annual Event

Written by Robert ID843

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Bob Marley

A reggae concert in honor of musical legend Bob Marley, which drew an audience of more than 200,000 Ethiopians to Addis Ababa, could become an annual fixture across Africa, its organizers said Monday.

The Bob Marley Foundation said it hoped to take the festival to another African country next year to honor Marley, whose songs like "Africa Unite" and "Get Up, Stand Up" have reverberated across the continent since the 1970s.

"We want to see African unity," said Desta Meghoo-Peddie, the director of the foundation established to prolong Marley's legacy after his death from cancer in 1981.

"It's our hope that we're taking this concert to a different African country and that's the plan on the drawing board," she told a news conference, flanked by U.S. singer, rap artist and hip hop star Lauryn Hill and Benin's Angelique Kidjo, who performed at the Marley tribute in Ethiopia.

Medhoo-Peddie declined to say which country might be the next host, saying she would first draw up proposals.

Dreadlocked Rastafarians flocked to Addis Ababa's main square Sunday to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the birth of the Jamaican singer, prompting some Ethiopians to suggest the government should do more to honor their own national heroes.

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Huge numbers of Ethiopians, many sporting red, green and yellow colors, attended the concert, the likes of which has perhaps never been seen in the Horn of Africa country considered a spiritual homeland by the Rastafarian faith.

Rastafarians see the late Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie as a living manifestation of God, a view that offends many Ethiopian Orthodox Christians who would prefer to see their royal heritage honored instead of Marley.

The Rastafarian belief in smoking marijuana -- the "holy herb" -- as a sacrament to bring them closer to God also draws disapproval from many in the socially conservative country.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and his family attended the concert, in sharp contrast to a reburial ceremony for Haile Selassie's remains conducted in 2000, which was not accorded the status of a state funeral.

"The government ... which denied a state funeral to Emperor Haile Selassie has now gone out of its way to provide a colorful celebration of the reggae legend Rastafarian Bob Marley who believes Haile Selassie is God," the privately owned Reporter weekly paper said in an editorial.

Haile Selassie's remains were reburied after they were found interred near a latrine, apparently after he had been murdered by the soldiers who ousted him in 1974 and uprooted his statues.

There is no official museum dedicated to the emperor, who died in 1975, although the Bob Marley Foundation laid the cornerstones Monday for a museum in Addis Ababa to display his treasures, including scepters and crowns.

[Source](#)